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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002598

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER BRIEFS CODEL  
PENCE ON LARIJANI VISIT

Classified By: Ambassador Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C/REL GBR) Turkish National Security Council  
Secretary-General Yigit Alpogan told CODEL Pence May 8 that

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he and other leaders delivered a tough message to his Iranian counterpart, Ali Larijani, during his visit to Ankara the same day. Alpogan said he told Larijani that Iran's attempt to conceal its nuclear program for so long is the cause of the international community's lack of trust of Iranian intentions, and that Tehran must take tangible steps to curb its enrichment and reprocessing capabilities. He said he warned Larijani that Iran cannot count on China and Russia to back Tehran in the UNSC, and that if there is a UNSCR, Turkey will support and abide by it. Larijani reportedly repeated the familiar Iranian line: we seek only peaceful uses of nuclear energy, not weapons. Alpogan worried that Ahmadinejad's ultra-nationalist rhetoric will paint Iran into a corner on this issue. Despite this worry, Alpogan advised the U.S. to remain firmly on the diplomatic track. End summary.

Larijani: We're Just Misunderstood

[¶2.](#) (C/REL GBR) On May 8, Turkish National Security Council Secretary-General Amb. Yigit Alpogan provided a congressional

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delegation led by Representative Mike Pence (R-IN) a briefing on his four hours of meetings the same day with his Iranian counterpart, Ali Larijani. According to Alpogan, Larijani complained that Iran's position on the nuclear issue has been misunderstood: Iran does not seek nuclear weapons capability, but only peaceful use of nuclear energy. Iran has the right to such peaceful uses, Larijani reportedly emphasized.

Alpogan: We Were Tough

[¶3.](#) (C/REL GBR) Alpogan said he delivered a firm message to

Larijani: Iran has hidden its nuclear program for 18 to 20 years, so it should be no surprise that there is a lack of trust between Iran and the international community. Turkey acknowledges Iran's right to peaceful uses, but nuclear weapons are another matter entirely. Alpogan emphasized that FonMin Gul and PM Erdogan would deliver the same message in their meetings with Larijani: Turkey is disturbed that Iran appears to be seeking nuclear weapons capability and, as a neighbor, does not approve.

¶4. (C/REL GBR) Alpogan said he warned Larijani that Iran cannot count on China and Russia blocking consensus in the UNSC, and that Iran may miscalculate if it counts on division within the P5. If there is a UNSCR, Turkey will abide by it and support it. He urged Iran to meet the demands of the international community to take tangible steps to curb enrichment and reprocessing. Only such steps will convince the world that Iran intends to comply. He also asked Larijani for clarification on the status of Iran's enrichment program.

¶5. (C/REL GBR) Larijani reportedly listened, but provided few details on the state of Iran's nuclear energy program, in particular how far Iran has gotten in its enrichment process.

Alpogan noted differing statements on enrichment: the IAEA says that Iran has achieved 3.6 percent uranium enrichment, Larijani has said four percent, Ahmadinejad five percent. Larijani apparently responded that the numbers do not much matter, since 20 percent enrichment is the threshold for industrial use, and Iran has not achieved this as yet. Alpogan told the CODEL that he understood 90 percent was the threshold for a weapons program.

Alpogan: No Question Tehran Wants the Bomb

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¶6. (C/REL GBR) Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) asked Alpogan about Iran's true intentions. Alpogan responded without hesitation

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that Tehran wants to develop nuclear weapons. He noted estimates that Iran may achieve this goal in six months to 10 years, but he believes Iran will have this capability at some point unless the international community comes together now to persuade the regime to stop. He acknowledged that Turkey is well within range of missiles Tehran now possesses and thus could be under threat from Iranian nukes. He also noted that the further Iran progresses in its nuclear weapons program, the less effective bombing their facilities would be since its scientists will already possess the required knowledge to start again.

Has Iran Painted Itself Into a Corner?

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¶7. (C/REL GBR) Alpogan warned that we cannot "reach the point of no return" with Iran on the nuclear issue, yet Ahmadinejad seems to be pushing Iran to this very point. Voters in Iran were angry with Khatami's failed reform efforts, and they have now turned to a populist, nationalist leader. Ahmadinejad has successfully rallied Iran around this nationalist theme, in particular on the nuclear and anti-Israel messages, and thus has propelled himself into a more powerful position domestically, perhaps even more powerful than the ayatollahs. Ahmadinejad may be number three in the Iranian hierarchy, but he is not taking orders at this point. Alpogan worried that it will be difficult for the Iranians to rein themselves in and make a deal on the nuclear issue, as the regime is painting itself into a corner with its extreme rhetoric. If Iran in the future develops nuclear weapons, however, Alpogan believes a decision on using them would be "collegial," that is the government and religious leaders would decide by consensus.

Stay the Diplomatic Course

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¶8. (C/REL GBR) Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-PA) asked what advice Alpogan would offer the U.S. on how to deal with this issue. Alpogan recommended that we stay firmly on the diplomatic road. The world was not united in the leadup to war in Iraq, but a UNSCR on Iran would be positive and would demonstrate consensus on the issue. Should Tehran continue to resist international pressure, the U.S. should nonetheless remain on the diplomatic path until the last moment. Should it at that point prove necessary to resort to other means, the U.S. would have at least proved to the world that we had done our best.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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